



# THE PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

Creating community wealth by  
addressing generational poverty  
and improving opportunity

# POVERTY IS EXPENSIVE

It is a drain on community resources  
It is a waste of human potential  
It impacts the next generation  
It impacts social capital and social cohesion

We can't have a **wealthier and more resilient community** unless we address poverty in more effective ways



**\$2.8  
BILLION**

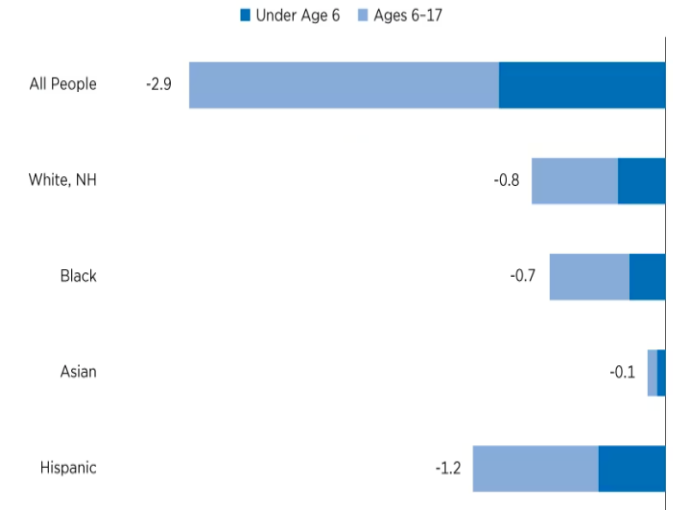


We  
started  
in a  
deep  
hole ...

.... and  
because of  
the  
pandemic,  
the hole  
got deeper.

THE HOLE COULD HAVE BEEN MUCH DEEPER.  
THIS IS A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO ACT.

Change in the Number of Children in Poverty Due to Child Tax Credit: 2021  
(In millions)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).



LOW-INCOME CHILDREN, WOMEN, SINGLE PARENTS AND PEOPLE OF  
COLOR ARE **DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED** BY POVERTY  
AND BY THE PANDEMIC



# FOUR APPROACHES

1. Preventing poverty
2. Alleviating suffering
3. Aiding transition to economic stability
4. Addressing structures in a community

**Hard Differentiators:**  
*Bridges Community of Practice Model*

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# PARABLE OF THE RIVER



There is a parable that tells the tale of two people walking by a river when they notice babies floating down the river.

One starts grabbing the babies out of the river, while the other runs upstream. The first asks, "Where are you going?! We have to save these babies," and the other replies,

**"I'm going to see who's throwing babies in the river."**







# PURPOSE

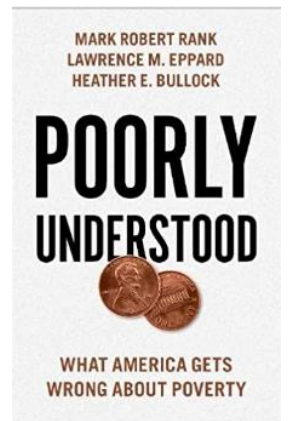
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**To research and develop a set of policies options that are**

- evidence-based
- guide long-term efforts
- to strategically create community wealth by addressing generational poverty and improving opportunity
- while also tactically addressing the immediate needs of those currently experiencing poverty
- for adoption or adaptation by local and tribal governments

# FOUR POLICY AREAS

1. Ensure the availability of jobs that will economically support a household
2. Address housing stability
3. Provide resources for reducing poverty
4. Build individual and community assets



# Right sizing the policy

**Too little?**  
**Program**  
**Area**



**Just right?**  
**Policy for**  
**local**  
**government**



**Too big?**  
**Advocacy**  
**Area**



# TWO PHASES AND THE TIMELINE

## Phase 1: Policy Development Dec. to June 2023

- Working Group meets
- Researchers engaged
- **Listening Sessions launched**
- Develop five to 10 policies for review and to be considered for adoption

### Goal:

- ❖ **By March, 3 to 5 policy recommendations**
- ❖ **By June, 5 to 7 more**

## Phase 2: Operational Review Starts Aug. 2023

- Working Group team reviews current programming and resource allocation to align with the adopted policies
- **Listening sessions continue**



Years of antipoverty work have revealed **two things**: **community interventions** achieve their greatest success when they are **connected to policy**, and **policy solutions** are most effective when they draw from **what is working in communities**.

**Angela Glover Blackwell**



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



## Grassroots & Grasstops

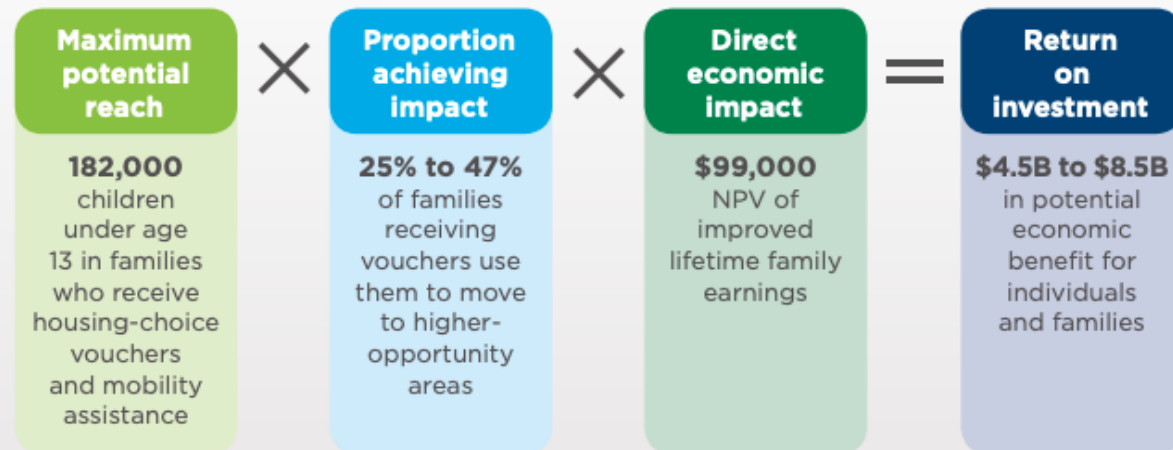
- ☐ 80 meetings
- ☐ ~320 people
- ☐ 2 Listening sessions
- ☐ National experts & other communities

## Reduce Concentrated Poverty

**Concept:** Help break apart the structural forces of racial and economic segregation that have created communities of concentrated poverty. Do this by investing deeply in select metro areas to both revitalize distressed neighborhoods and offer low-income people the opportunity to move to more resource-rich neighborhoods. At the same time, expand mobility efforts to many more communities through direct investments and the creation of a national hub that coordinates mobility efforts

### Aspirational individual outcome

Children live in neighborhoods where there are abundant opportunities to advance economically



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Is this reducing poverty and creating opportunity or alleviating suffering?
- ❖ Is there a strategic and tactical element?
- ❖ Is there credible evidence-based research behind it?
- ❖ Is it applicable at the level of local government?
- ❖ Is it supported by area experts, providers and those with lived experience?
- ❖ Is there a potential return on investment?
- ❖ Is it targeting the parts of our community with the highest rates of poverty?
- ❖ Is it addressing and mitigating historic systemic inequities?
- ❖ Does this impact urban and smaller/rural communities differently?
- ❖ Can policies be grouped for greater impact?
- ❖ Are there any unintended consequences?



# LESSONS FROM A ROADMAP TO REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

- ❑ Individual policy and program changes are **insufficient**
- ❑ **Bundling** work-oriented and income support programs can **reduce poverty AND increase employment**

# BUNDLING POLICIES CAN HAVE A GREATER EFFECT

	Work-oriented package	Work-Based and Universal Support Package	Means-tested supports and work package	Universal supports and work package
Expand EITC	X	X	X	X
Expand Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	X	X	X	X
Increase the minimum wage	X			X
Roll out WorkAdvance	X			
Expand housing voucher program			X	
Expand SNAP benefits			X	
Begin a child allowance		X		X
Begin child support assurance				X
Eliminate 1996 immigration eligibility restrictions				X
Percent Reduction in the number of poor children	-18.8%	-35.6%	-50.7%	-52.3%
Percent Reduction in the number of children in deep poverty	-19.3%	-41.3%	-51.7%	-55.1%
Change in number of low-income workers	+1,003,000	+568,000	+404,000	+611,000
Annual cost, in billions	\$8.7	\$44.5	\$90.7	\$108.8

Birth to Adulthood					
Birth	Pre School	Elementary	Middle / HS	Post 2ndary	Adult
Baby Bond/ CSA	Early childhood education	Digital Inclusion	Financial Education Career Exploration	Promise community/ Tuition support	Workforce Development
Critical Family Resources					
Access to Resources, Housing Stability & Mobility, Eviction Prevention, & Health/ Mental Health Care					
Asset Building					
Home/ Commercial Property Ownership Small Business Support					
Infrastructure Priorities					
Transportation, Neighborhood Reinvestment, Economic Development, Investments in High Poverty Areas Environmental Justice/ Climate Resilience					
Ongoing Evaluation					
Do No Harm/ Equity lens					

**BLUE TEXT** = IN DEVELOPMENT    **PURPLE TEXT** = INVESTIGATING



# UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA RESEARCHERS

## **Brian Mayer**, Professor School of Sociology

Brian Mayer is a Professor of Sociology with the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences with expertise in the area of poverty as well as other areas. Dr. Mayer supported the Tucson Mayor's Poverty Commission from 2012-2014. He also developed the experiential learning Tucson Poverty Project class that incorporates community-based research approaches and has received recognition for his innovative work in teaching and community engagement.

His work in environmental sociology has examined the role of community activism and participation in the identification and management of potential environmental health risks.



## **Keith Bentele**, SIROW Associate Research Professor

Keith Bentele, PhD, is an Associate Research Professor with the Southwest Institute of Research on Women (SIROW) in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and holds a Ph.D. in Sociology. Dr. Bentele's research has examined state-level poverty rates, inequality, homelessness, and the generosity and accessibility of various safety-net programs.

He is interested in policy-relevant research with the potential to reduce poverty and homelessness. His specific areas of methodological expertise are in the use of quantitative methods and statistics.





# 3 HOUSING POLICIES

## 1. Affordable Housing to Reduce the Geographic Concentration of Poverty and Increase Mobility

*Efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing should prioritize practices and investments that reduce the geographic concentration of poverty and increase the number of mixed-income neighborhoods.*

*In higher opportunity areas the availability of affordable housing should be increased and households with young children living in high poverty areas should be prioritized for access to these opportunities.*

1. Reduce housing instability with an emphasis on the prevention of displacement of households in high poverty areas experiencing investment
2. Support homeownership to reduce housing insecurity for lower income households and communities

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## Affordable Housing to Reduce the Geographic Concentration of Poverty and Increase Mobility

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In **higher opportunity areas** the availability of affordable housing should be increased and households with **young children living** in high poverty areas should be prioritized for access to these opportunities.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## Affordable Housing to Reduce the Geographic Concentration of Poverty and Increase Mobility

### Tactical Element:

Households currently residing in high poverty areas who take advantage of affordable housing opportunities in low poverty areas may **experience an immediate improvement in their quality of life, mental health,** educational and employment opportunities, and their degree of safety.

### Strategic Element:

Children participating in such housing mobility programs were found to have **substantially higher lifetime earnings and college attendance rates,** while adults experienced improvements in both physical and mental health.

# WHY THIS POLICY IS APPLICABLE TO PIMA COUNTY REGION?

Pima County exhibits a **strong geographic concentration of poverty**... within the city of Tucson the prevalence of poverty at the level of census tracts varies dramatically from rates as low as 3% in suburban areas to 56% in one census tract downtown (Census ACS, 2023).

This **spatial distribution of poverty is very similar to the pattern of racial segregation** in Tucson, with non-white Tucsonans constituting the majority of residents in these higher poverty regions of the city (Amodio et al., 2022).

Higher poverty areas in Pima County have been found to score high on **neighborhood vulnerability metrics** (City of Tucson Pima County Consortium 2020-2024 HUD Consolidated Plan, 2020) and **low on metrics attempting to measure opportunities** such as good schools, good jobs, access to healthcare, and adequate housing (Southwest Fair Housing Council 2018).



# ALIGNMENT WITH 3 KEY MANDATES

- City of Tucson's Housing Affordability Strategy (HAST)
- Pima County's Regional Affordable Housing Commission
- HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) mandate (1968)

“proactively take meaningful actions to **overcome patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, eliminate disparities in opportunities, and foster inclusive communities free from discrimination.**”

“significant actions that are designed and can be reasonably expected to achieve a material positive change **increasing fair housing choice or decreasing disparities in access to opportunity.**”

# CITE EVIDENCE BASED RESEARCH & ROI:

- “[b]eing poor in a very poor neighborhood subjects residents to costs and limitations ***above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty.***”
- “***Housing mobility*** is also worthy of support because of high quality evidence demonstrating its effectiveness in ***breaking multigenerational cycles of poverty*** that persist in high-poverty neighborhoods, and for improving the lives of both children and their parents.”

Numerous longitudinal studies show **improved educational outcomes** for the children who relocated from high poverty neighborhoods.

Children who relocated to low poverty areas **had incomes \$1,624 higher on average** relative to children in the control group. Projected over the lifetime estimate that moving a child out of public housing to a low-poverty area when young ... will increase the child’s total **lifetime earnings** by about \$302,000. **This is equivalent to a gain of \$99,000 per child moved...”.**

In addition to reducing poverty for participating households at the time of relocation, the **intergenerational persistence of these improvements is impressive.**

# IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

1. **Identification and regular review** of high opportunity areas
2. **Transportation planning and investments** in high opportunity areas with affordable housing to address inadequate traffic capacity the lack of reliable and affordable transit.
3. **Zoning code changes to facilitate more housing in high opportunity areas**
4. **Bonus points on applications for funding of affordable housing development** for proposals that would be built/preserved in high opportunity neighborhoods.
5. **Prioritize and seek proposals to develop affordable housing on surplus government property** in high opportunity neighborhoods
6. **Prioritize housing vouchers** to be used in high opportunity neighborhoods, coupled with counseling/navigation services
7. Identify and implement **new funding sources** to support affordable housing production (e.g. affordable housing impact fees, commercial impact fees, housing production trust funds, tax exemptions for non-profit affordable housing, and/or affordable housing bonds)
8. **Homeownership assistance and similar supports** can also support housing mobility and relocation to higher opportunity areas

# FEEDBACK FROM 29 ADULTS (MOST PARENTS)

## Family

**66% - Very Likely or Likely**

**34% - Maybe, but it would depend**

**3% - Very unlikely or No**

**3% - No**

## Community

**79% - Very Likely or Likely**

**14% - Maybe, but it would depend**

**6% - Very unlikely**

**42%** People of color

**91%** Women

# COMMENTS

Nice neighbors feel safe.

Look more into older/unused buildings then renovate. Try to stay in town instead of expanding Tucson.

I would start by identifying the cause of poverty. Ask landlords why are they charging so much. Also, increase access to training skills. I worry about Government control with these funded programs.

We need to start strengthening the "poverty" communities. Sometimes people have cultural Connections to their own communities rather than moving to mid to high income areas.

Mental health is very important.

It's not treating the root cause of poverty. There will be high cost to tax payers.



# QUESTION, REFLECTIONS, DISCUSSION

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